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INTO THE TREES

by George Morgenstern

H. V. Wade of the Detroit News, commenting on Hemingway's latest title (Across The River and Into The Trees) said, "He gets good length on his drives, but is wild off the tee". The same can be said of Mr. Truman and his foreign policy, which is -- or ought to be -- the overriding issue in the election now less than a week away. He has been hitting them long, but nobody can tell where they will go.

Mr. Truman, with Secretary Acheson caddying, batted a long one into the Korean rough. General MacArthur had to make the recovery. He put the ball right on the green, and Mr. Truman rushed out to Wake Island to sink the putt and claim the applause of the gallery.

Mr. Truman also achieved a long ball when he stopped off upon his return at San Francisco. There, in commemoration of the labors of Alger Hiss and kindred spirits in founding the United Nations five years ago, he pledged the United Nations to deal with "any further outbreak of aggression". Even so devoted a supporter of universal correctional action as the Louisville Courier-Journal began to wonder about Mr. Truman's control. That organ, discerning "a world Monroe Doctrine, and more", warned that "the terrible danger is that the United States may set itself up as the guardian of the status quo all over the world".

Back in Washington, Mr. Truman was asked whether he and MacArthur had finally achieved a meeting of the minds on Formosa. The President reacted as if it had been suggested that his card for the Wake Island exhibition showed a 4 where he should have posted a 6.

With some appropriate remarks about the processes of intellectually honest men, he said that Formosa had been settled five weeks before, when he disqualified MacArthur for trying to say that the Island was vital to the security of the United States. The disposition of Formosa Mr. Truman left to the United Nations.

About this time it might have dawned on the more acute observers that the only club in his kit upon which Mr. Truman relied was U.N. In an important and bitterly contested campaign, he had not made what could be construed as a single "political" speech. He had not damned Taft; he had not flattered Lucas. He had confined himself to glorification of the United Nations and had achieved a performance almost as high level as Tom Dewey's before the Hanley letter.

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This interpretation of Mr. Truman's method was borne out at Flushing Meadow. It was no accident that his appearance before the General Assembly coincided with the effective date of the U.N. Charter five years earlier.

At Flushing Meadow Mr. Truman easily navigated the difficult Korean dogleg ("dramatic evidence that the Charter works") and cleared the water barrier by pledging U.N. to "quick and effective action in any future case of aggression". The word "any", repeated twice over, at San Francisco and before the Assembly, would seem, incidentally, to provide the Courier-Journal with its answer.

II

As election draws nigh, Mr. Truman is found waggling his club and addressing the ball for another mighty swing. What's he shooting at? What's he aiming for? Why is he draped in the U.N. flag?

Mr. Truman is a politician. The object of politicians is to keep their party and themselves in power. In 1948 Mr. Truman accomplished this by rough-and-tumble methods while Mr. Dewey was proving too proud to fight. Now Mr. Truman has adopted a different technique. He has gone noble on us. He is the Statesman: an intellectually honest man. Please don't quibble, even if he did describe a statesman during the 1944 campaign as merely a dead politician. Mr. Truman isn't dead.

This pose has a powerful appeal. By looking into the long distance, Mr. Truman does himself the kindness of overlooking what lies at his feet:

> World War II and its dead and maimed, the pious pretensions and the moral fraud of Administration professions, the lingering debt, the attendant inflation, the default of every promise and the dissipation of every sane political objective which might have justified the sacrifice.
>
> The diplomatic disasters of Teheran, Yalta, and Potsdam which transferred to Stalin, with the assent of Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Truman, spoils which had been sought by Germany and Japan; and which created, in Russia, one of the most ruthless conquerors in the long history of military empires.
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> The debacle in Asia contrived by George C. Marshall, John Stewart Service, Owen Lattimore, and Dean Acheson, among others who, having first regarded Communism as something tame as a house tabby, were confronted with the snapping dragon of China, and, in Korea, with a tiger gone mad.
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> The Korean backlash, costing more than 35,000 American casualties and a vast financial outlay, with the bill far from complete, which was Mr. Acheson's reward for extending an invitation to Red aggression when, in defining the American defensive perimeter in the Pacific, he excluded Korea.

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The precedent laid down in Korea, by which the present Administration, or any successor of like outlook, is bound to commit American troops to action everywhere, on all occasions, at Communist initiative.

The corollary that the United States is reduced, by Mr. Truman's implicit confession, to a garrison state, eternally on watch and eternally under the multiplex strain of maintaining that watch.

War, conscription, controls, shortages, taxes, debt, and inflation -- these cannot be represented to anyone as ends desirable in themselves. But these are the inevitable products of the Truman foreign policy. They must be rationalized and justified, for with them there is power for the Administration, and a license to spend without limit.

To persuade the people that these undesirable things merit unprotesting and respectful acquiescence, they must be chastely wrapped in altruism and decked out with the ribbons of a high moral purpose. That is why we are hearing so much about the inescapable duty Americans owe to a new and unfamiliar flag, and about the promise of hope conveyed by the United Nations. The tactic is old and has been expressed:

Hope springs eternal in the human breast;
Man never is, but always is to be, blest.

III

That the United States now has an unlimited commitment to war has been made plain by Mr. Truman. That the nation exists as a garrison state is attested by Chairman Vinson of the House Armed Services Committee. His specifications are 3 million men under arms, fed by a draft of at least 24 months, and maintained and equipped at a cost of 35 to 50 billion dollars a year -- indefinitely.

Senator George phophesies higher personal income taxes and an excess profits tax on corporations. Mr. Truman proposes to call Congress into session to enact them directly after the election. Mr. Vinson predicts a total annual budget of between 75 and 90 billion dollars, to be met currently as far as is possible. Taxation on that scale will not long be supportable, even if payable in dollars inflated to the size of horse blankets.

These are the realities behind Mr. Truman's policy. These are the facts which the whipping U.N. flags may obscure. For all of the brave talk about collective security, the job and the bills, whether in war or in nervous peace, must fall unendingly upon the United States. But "unendingly" is not exact. There will be an end, and has to be an end, because this burden cannot be sustained as long as a tenacious adversary may choose to keep us off balance and on edge -- as long as he exhausts us, not his own patience.

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That end could come through internal collapse, accompanied by the falling apart of the United Nations, as the hindmost seek terms with the devil. It could come through war initiated by Russia, out of fear of the intentions animating our preoccupation with "defensive" force. Or it could come through resort to war by U.S. leadership in an attempt to forestall collapse under demands no longer endurable upon our economy.

Mr. Truman and his party, naturally, have failed to discuss any such prospects, and, with the exception of Mr. Hoover, who spoke plainly to the end that God helps them that help themselves, Europeans not necessarily excluded, the GOP has been similarly silent. Indeed, we have it from Senator Margaret Chase Smith, along with her second to Dewey's nomination of Ike the Ambiguous, that although it is a function of a minority party to point out the mistakes of the opposition, sometimes this is carried too far. In the lady's view it is churlish to disagree.

IV

The American people, who ought to be reckoning the costs and consequences of the policy disclosed, show all of the symptoms of prolonged shellshock. The central issue of the campaign, with its fateful bearing upon the future, has neither been stated nor debated. To challenge the Truman assumptions and the validity of the United Nations as the agency for carrying them out would be "isolationist" -- a term of meaningless derogation which cows almost everyone.

All of this leaves Mr. Truman immaculate in his political plus fours. He is the evangelist of peace and the spiritual legatee of those heroes who turned back the paynim hordes at Tours and the gates of Vienna. He has imbued U.N. with an aura of high morality, and has saved enough in the atomizer to douse himself. These emanations are particularly useful, for it is on grounds of public morals that the Administration is most vulnerable. Such heady perfumes induce nepenthe: Pendergast, the K.C. safe blowing, Vaughan and Maragon, the Amerasia case, the atomic spies, Secretary Acheson, the little Reds who weren't there in the Tydings report, the discoveries of Mr. Kefauver, and sundry other embarrassments become but figments of contingent matter.

So Mr. Truman stands happily on the tee, ready to drive one into the next county, if not the next continent, across the river and into the trees -- wild as usual, but long in flight. The caddies sent to retrieve will wear the customary habiliments of khaki and will be fortified with iron rations for an extended absence.

George Morgenstern is the author of Pearl Harbor -- The Story of Secret War (Devin-Adair, 1947).

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events Vol. VII, No. 44

By Frank C. Hanighen November 1, 1950

MILITARY FIASCO: The Defense Chiefs of the North Atlantic Military Alliance started their crucial conference in this town last week amid a deafening fanfare of hush-hush. Civilians were kept a block away and some reporters were barred despite credentials. And General Bradley provided a melodramatic touch when cameramen were allowed to take a formal picture. He urged his colleagues to cover up documents on their desks lest "long-range lenses" might catch something important. However, now that the meeting has ended (on a sour note), it appears that about the only real secret is the one officially kept from the American people -- that, so far, we are still requested to pay the piper without calling the tune.

There is no mistaking the disappointment of Pentagon officials. The French obstruction -- stubborn refusal to permit real German rearmament -- has been widely publicized; but American observers assert that the British Government's moves for rearmament are almost as disappointing, that these moves are quite inadequate for the situation. It is emphasized that the European generals take the proper view and agree with the U.S. as to what is needed; but that their superiors, the civilian Defense Secretaries of their respective governments, do not talk the same way.

Indeed, it seems to be a well-concealed fact that the proposal for making Eisenhower Chief of Staff of the projected army sprang from the impasse behind the closed doors. According to some accounts, the military members of the meeting jumped to the conclusion that the only feasible way to bring the European governments in line was to appoint an American Chief of Staff of commanding prestige; and that then he could pressure the foreign capitals into taking the essential steps. While some Americans thought MacArthur would be the best selection, even they conceded that for political reasons Eisenhower is the most eligible.

Disgruntled military observers here are now saying that the only course is to serve the ultimatum recommended by former President Herbert Hoover, namely: that the U.S. will provide no more money until a real European army is in sight and that "no U.S. divisions will be landed until then". But there is no confirmation that the White House or State Department will give any heed to the former President's speech, so much admired within Pentagon walls. (We apologize for the typographical error in this column last week: the Hoover address was given on October 19, not October 28.)

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ELECTION: "In the parliament of the present," said James Russell Lowell, "every man represents a constituency of the past." Applying this remark to the present election, one wonders whether the voter will reflect a constituency of the recent past, or of the good old days; of the creeping totalitarianism of the CIO, Fair Dealism, imperialism (new style); or of the rights of property, of a limited central government and George Washington's advice on foreign policy. The coming election will prove a test: not primarily a test of the parties or candidates, but of the electorate. Has the veritable rot of the past 18 years gone so deep that the voters will fail to react to a clear menace not only to their way of life but to their very lives? If the Republicans make only moderate gains, the rot will spread and the menace will grow.

---- 'Tis better to be frank, and confess that we have no guess as to the outcome. The only substantial straw in the wind (amid many gossamer ones from all parts of the country) which we have noted concerns the Taft-Ferguson battle. A

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labor union functionary here, usually a ready better, has refused to take an even bet on the Ohio senatorial race. However, this may reflect, not Taft progress, but the general wariness among campaign dopesters this year.

---- Talk among professional politicos here is that there was a deal between Dewey and Lehman forces before the New York party slates were selected. The deal was that Dewey would get the relatively unknown Lynch as an opponent, and Lehman would be awarded the aged Hanley. Whether this story is true or not, belief in it is already spreading through GOP ranks in the country. Republican Senators are especially angry, for naturally they deemed the defeat of Lehman more important than the Governorship.

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DRAFT AND ELECTIONS: Popular discontent over the present draft set-up may be the "secret weapon" against Congressional incumbents in next week's elections. But if this animus sways voters significantly, dopesters think it will hurt Democrats more than Republicans -- in short, blame will fall more heavily on the Administration and its followers. The draft in any form has never been popular.

Certainly, confusion and dissatisfaction over present application of the draft has been mounting rapidly, especially in industry and among students who see a college career cut short in the middle. How to equitably distribute the burden of military duty is far from solution, and cannot help but roll in on Congress in a tidal wave of criticism. Hershey has devised a formula, applicable to areas according to need, to distribute young men from colleges in the three directions of armed service, industry and essential professions. But here again no satisfactory criteria has been devised, with resultant chaos and confusion in colleges.

Hershey's plan narrows deferments to the utmost, and rules out preferential treatment for any class other than those with high scholastic standing, giving real promise of specialized competence. Hershey opposes blanket deferment of scientists or science students; many who seek B.S. degrees never become scientists in a sense warranting deferment, he says. Yet students not enrolled in science or professional courses may become key men in industry, government or vital civilian activity.

There's no indication Congress after the election will accept and pass a stereotyped plan. Mr. Truman might have gained action before Congress went home in September, but he blew hot and then cold, and finally decided to wait until after the election. With the election behind, Congress will have plenty of time for prolonged battle, and Mr. Truman, after a strategic blunder, will need every resource he can command.

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CAPITAL NOTES: The proposal for an excess profits tax, backed by powerful labor forces, will precipitate probably the hardest battle in the new session. Objection to it is that it would curb business and industrial expansion, give tight Federal control over investment, and, in the light of Treasury experience, not bring in much Federal revenue. Again as a peace-time precedent, it would go far toward setting up a permanent Welfare State.

Such taxes have been levied in the past only in time of actual war, and quickly removed with peace to encourage growth of small and varied enterprise and in peace-time employment. Despite Senator George's cautionary recent statement, it is believed here Republicans and Southerners are likely to come together again in an effective legislative coalition.

---- Big Labor is emerging as a big political party, and assuming control in vital sectors of the Democratic Party. It is demanding, and gaining a more and more important voice in the formation of government policy. Union leaders are not satisfied with the scope of power assigned to them in the rearmament control agen-

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cies. They want a voice in policy making, their own consultants in every defense agency, and their spokesmen in administrative jobs, telling industry what to do. Big Labor, on the move and with its political laurels (if it wins them), will bulk bigger in rearmament and arms' aid.

---- The "heavy spending" bloc in both branches of Congress, intent on the campaign of 1952, will offer increasing resistance to budget reductions if it adheres to precedent. Conceivably Mr. Truman may contemplate some cuts as a trading point to gain other stubbornly contested legislation from rebellious law makers. Tightened curbs on credit and installment buying are generating already discernible pressures among the "grass roots", and may compel the Truman budget makers to effect some sharp and clearly evident reductions. But budget making at hand now will cover the one and two year periods encompassing the election of 1952, and voluntary cuts at such a time do not find a precedent over the last two decades.

---- Mr. Truman is quietly pressing for action on statehood proposals for Hawaii and Alaska in the coming Congress. His reason is, of course, political; for four new Senators would probably favor FEPC and his "civil rights", and the remaining 20 of his 24 campaign promises of 1948, including socialized medicine. But Southern Senators promise a filibuster.

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LOBBIES: Edna Lonigan reports -- The Buchanan Committee on Lobbying has issued its report, signed only by the Democratic majority members. It is a masterpiece of double talk, couched in language carefully modeled on the style of impartial research reports. It points out how greatly lobbying has increased in size and subtlety, but without mentioning that the conservative organizations for mass distribution of political literature are a direct response to the skill with which the New Deal used Government funds and Government agents to spread its new political doctrines at the grass roots. WPA and AAA were the pioneers, but the public housing bloc and Mr. Brannan and Mr. Ewing have conspicuously improved on their methods.

The Report favors "full public disclosure" about all private organizations influencing Congress. In the case of private agencies representing American business, full public disclosure meant reaching back to the original correspondence of the organization, to trace every dollar of contributions. But in the case of the Public Affairs Institute, "full public disclosure" stopped with the statement that this organization was financed by the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen and the Foundation for World Government. The Committee did not bring out that this agency is one of the most powerful propaganda bodies of the PAC-ADA-Fair Deal combination which now virtually rules the so-called Democratic Party. Indeed, one might say that therefore such an organization is virtually an arm of the Executive. The Public Affairs Committee has been potent in spreading propaganda about Point Four.

The public is less concerned with the growth of a few huge private propaganda agencies than with the growth of huge governmental propaganda groups controlled by the managers of the Fair Deal and deriving their funds from the public treasury. But the GOP members of the Committee were wise not to formally answer this extremely partisan document, except to point out its omissions. The only possible answer will be given on November 7. The issue is political, not legal.

If we elect a Congress subservient to the Administration, we shall have new lobbying committees in House and Senate which will set to work with Fair Deal thoroughness to harass private propaganda agencies by taking away tax exemption, by forcing disclosure of names of contributors and other "reforms". Private pressure groups, of course, will not be abolished outright. As the Report warns us, the Government will merely set "limits" on what it considers the proper size and scope of such organizations, in the name of "moral judgments in the public interest".

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Book Events

The English Middle Classes, by Roy Lewis and Angus Maude. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $3.75. Reviewed by Frank Chodorov.

"Nobody has ever found a definition of the English middle classes which is short, satisfactory and watertight." That statement, from the book under review, can be applied to any social grouping. There really are no classes; there are only individuals, each with innate and acquired characteristics. That is why the best that Karl Marx could do in the way of a definition of the detested "bourgeois" was a caricature.

A class is a state of mind; one belongs to it only if one consciously makes an effort at belonging. A middle class -- just like Marx's proletariat -- is a group of people who like to think of themselves as middle class. The best we can do at defining it is to isolate the thoughts or the values most common to the membership.

The most characteristic value of the middle class -- as distinguished from the proletariat or upper class -- is the importance of getting ahead. This urge to climb expresses itself, primarily, in the economic field; but, the acquisition of wealth is only the necessary means for the acquisition of satisfactions of an ostentatious character: a car, a suburban home, better education for the children, "keeping up with the Joneses". Out of this common impulse evolves behavior mannerisms that give the group an identifiable coloration.

The authors of this most informative book trace the origin of the English middle classes to the development of trade during the Middle Ages. (Without arguing the point, we find something akin to the English middle classes in antiquity, when social climbing was sacerdotal, militaristic or bureaucratic.) With the development of manufactures, and the growing importance of the professions, the personnel of the middle classes was enlisted from groups previously debarred by hereditary or conventional considerations. Intermarriage broke down arbitrary delimitations and the claims of the nouveau riche could not be permanently ignored. But, whatever the shifts in personnel, the identification of climbing, of aspiring to better things, materially and culturally, marked the middle classes always.

The differentiation of Society into classes is a social irritant, particularly because the tendency towards exclusiveness comes into conflict with the common desire to get ahead. Then there are the petty foibles that hurt, and the feeling of an economic injustice inhering in the differentiation. Nevertheless, the desire to climb is a definite force in what we call progress. If people did not strive for improvement there would be none. There is no question but what the middle classes of England played an important part in shaping their country's culture and furthering its economy.

Now comes the Socialist Government with its program of forcibly de-classifying English Society. On the theory that the ills of Society are all due to differences in incomes, it proposes to enforce equalitarianism. Through the instrument of taxation, it aims to pull up the living standards of the working classes at the expense of the middle classes; it siphons into wages what it draws out of salaries.

The obvious effect of this policy is to kill off the aspirations of the very elements in English Society to which England owes its greatness. The socialization of industry can be accomplished by power, but there is no way of socializing desires. One cannot get around the fact that people work for themselves, not for Society, and if they are denied the enjoyment and possession of the fruits of their labors they have no interest in laboring. Thus far, the net result of the English experiment in Socialism has been to discourage production.

There is one point the book indicates but does not emphasize; it is that a new middle class is arising in England consisting not of producers but of bureaucrats.

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